

Title: The Watcher (part 2)

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She could not bring
herself to raise her voice
to the old one again; his
pain at witnessing the
slaughter of two races in
his dreams for thousands
of years was enough
punishment. It seemed he
had been spared from his
own crime by Exodus'
plot. "But the Meer...
what became of our
people, Adranath? Are we
the last of our race?"

"The time has come!" He
stood quickly and smiled
once more. "Come, come
child! You have returned
to us and now the time
of the awakening is at
hand!"

He took her hand and
helped her rise and
immediately began walking
away at a brisk pace.
With nothing else to
guide her actions in this
strange place, she
followed him, unsure of
what awaited her. They
walked in silence for
nearly an hour until they
reached the base of the
mountains, a small clearing
in the grass not far
away from the Juuka
fortress she had barely
escaped days earlier.

Adranath moved his hands
in complicated arcs and
small motes of light fell
from him like dust. He
clapped his hands together
and the lights fell to the
ground and swirled
together forming one

bright point. The light spread along the ground and formed the shape of a square stone platform before it faded. A platform of polished wood with what seemed to be blink runes was fitted into the top of the neatly carved rock.

"Come." Adranath offered Dasha his hand, which she suspiciously took. Together they stepped onto the wooden platform and vanished. When they reappeared Dasha could see that they were in some sort of crypt. Tombs in rows stretched on from one end of the massive chamber to the other with small dots of torchlight burning throughout. It was obvious Meer had built this place, but she had never seen it before.

What is this place?
These are not death
tombs, Adranath."

"No, child. It was the only way we could follow. The sleep of eternity holds the Meer here." He walked through the chamber to a tomb whose lid had not been sealed. "But someone had to stay. Someone had to watch for the Juka." He turned to her. "The duty was mine. After what I had done... what I had once done and was undone... I had to atone."

"You have been watching and waiting... for thousands of years?!" She understood the madness that now seemed to plague the old eternal. After centuries and centuries of seclusion in

this land he had lost a bit of his composure. Eternals would exist forever but in solitude even an immortal mind had to suffer over such a great expanse of time. "The Meer gave up their home so that we could wait for the time when the struggle for balance could begin anew. The fortress has returned.

The Juka have returned.

You, my child, you have returned." He turned in a full circle, taking in the hundreds of tombs that had waited for him for endless centuries. His task was now complete.

"Now rise, my people! Rise and continue the fight!"

He slammed his staff down onto the floor and held his hand aloft. A bright blue light shot forth from his fingertips and enveloped the entire room in its glow. Dasha shielded her eyes slightly and looked back and forth as the light bathed every surface and faded. At first it was imperceptible but bit-by-bit the sounds of movement could be heard. Beside her, a tomb cracked open and the lid drifted aside. Another eternal rose from the sarcophagus and turned to meet her gaze.

"Dasha! Upon awakening I could have hoped to see nothing so wonderful as the sight of you returned to your people!" Dasha could only stare in amazement. The entire race had slept for centuries here so that they may once again devote themselves to the balance. All was not lost.

"Watcher, you have done

well." The eternal said to Adranath. "Your devotion has saved us all and we are in your debt."

Adranath turned to Dasha, the look of a frightened child on his face. "I... am I forgiven, Dasha? After all I have done, all that I would have done... all of this that has occurred... I can be the only one to blame. Had I not been such a hasty fool in that time, we would not have had to bring ourselves to this new world. After all this time... have I been redeemed?"

She smiled and took his hand gently. "You once told me that wisdom accepts the inevitability of change."

One by one, the tombs opened and an entire race awoke from their sleep.